

Amerikanische und Britische Literatur

Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* and Gail Honeyman, *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*

Both this semester's books are their authors' first novels, both aroused considerable interest on publication, and both are concerned with loneliness. In other respects, however, they are very different. Carson McCullers's haunting *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940) is set in a small mill town in the deep South in 1938-39. Gail Honeyman's *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* (2017) is set in present-day Glasgow and adopts a largely humorous voice to convey the narrator's psychological difficulties and traumatic past.

The course will mainly be devoted to *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, which will be analysed in socio-historical context and in relation to Carson McCullers's other fiction. McCullers's imagination was often drawn to outsiders marginalised as a result of their race, their class, their age, their sexuality or their disability. In this novel the deaf-mute John Singer provides a focal point and a projection screen for the yearning of the other main characters to resolve or transcend their isolation and the restrictions of their society.

Prior to its publication, *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* was the object of a bidding war among eight publishers, which HarperCollins won with a six-figure advance. Since its release, it has enjoyed blockbuster sales, as well as winning the 2017 Costa First Novel Award and the British Book Awards Book of the Year. Taking Gail Honeyman's novel as an example of commercial or genre fiction, I shall consider what makes a bestseller and investigate some of the workings of the publishing industry.

Lectures will refer to the Penguin Modern Classics edition of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (ISBN: 978-0141185224) and to the HarperCollins paperback edition of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* (ISBN: 978-0008172145).

Dozent: Prof. D.Phil. Alan Robinson, Professor für Englische Sprache und Literatur

Mittwoch, 18.15 bis 19.45 Uhr, Raum HSG 23-001
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